

August 3, 2012

Dear AASHE STARS Review Committee,

WKU seeks an Innovation Credit for its MBA concentration in sustainability.

Western Kentucky University's Gordon Ford College of Business features the only MBA program in the state offering an emphasis in sustainability. The College, internationally known for excellent business and accounting programs, recognizes the key linkage between business and sustainability. The sustainability concentration was developed in 2010 and offered to the first MBA cohort in 2011.

WKU's MBA courses in sustainability are designed to help students face some of the most complex social and environmental problems around the world. By integrating electives into our 33 credit-hour curriculum, we have allowed for five "mini-class sessions" (1.5 hour classes) in business sustainability. These unique courses innovatively explore the nexus between sustainability and business:

- A) Business Interests in Sustainability (survey course in 2 parts),*
- B) Metrics in Sustainability,*
- C) Entrepreneurial Opportunities in Sustainability, and*
- D) Sustainability & Social Entrepreneurship.*

The MBA program recruited faculty from a mix of interested business professors and community professionals including a(n); A) a regulatory law professor; B) WKU's Sustainability Coordinator with an advanced Biology degree; C) the Center Director for Entrepreneurship & Innovation; and D) a local social entrepreneur.

Students are engaged in a variety of diverse educational experiences, ranging from conducting in-the-field stream water quality assessments to critical analysis of corporate sustainability reports. Students gain knowledge of such concepts as cradle to cradle manufacturing, bio-mimicry, ecological design, and environmental justice issues.

The business-sustainability program is attracting attention. The program is

- drawing prospective students to WKU from undergraduate programs in sustainability from across the region;
- reported about multiple times in the local and regional news;
- co-led by the first university-wide recipient of the WKU President's Award for Sustainability; and is
- a candidate for an AACSB Innovation in Education Awards at the MidAmerican Business Deans Association.

Please don't hesitate to contact me for further information or with any questions you may have.

Sincerely,

Dr. Bob Hatfield

Associate Dean of Graduate Programs and Research